

ME and My Shadow

In February each year, thousands of New Hampshire students participate in a job shadowing experience. Job shadowing gives students the chance to actually examine what people do in various jobs. The National Groundhog Job Shadow initiative provides an opportunity for connecting the subjects you study in school with the reality of the workplace. With a little bit of preparation, the job shadow experience can be made even more valuable. Take a look at the following ways to connect your classroom work to your career exploration. You will find that job shadowing will open your eyes to new possibilities.

Step #1. Take some time to explore your interests. What are your strongest subjects in school? Talk to your guidance counselor or teachers. There are some excellent ways to match your interests and academic subjects. Many schools have computerized methods of determining your career interests. You will probably discover that you have one very strong area of interest.

Step #2. Select, with the help of parents,

teachers, and guidance counselors, a career cluster. A career cluster is a group of careers that have common characteristics. You may find that you have interests in more than one career cluster. Having more than one area of interest is an advantage. You will find there will be more opportunities when the time comes to select your job shadow site.

Step #3. Select a job site. Your school may have a list of job sites that offer shadowing opportunities. Remember that many job sites offer a range of career possibilities. Sometimes shadowing many different careers will help you focus on selecting the job that really interests you.

Step #4. Research your job site. The Internet offers the opportunity for students to do some investigation. Do a search by company name. You will be surprised at the wealth of information available online. You may find that knowing about your job site will help you ask the right questions. It may even give you clues about what to wear to your job shadowing site.

Step #5. Prepare

questions. You will be assigned a worksite mentor. Don't be afraid to ask your mentor about his/her job. The best questions involve asking your mentor what they like or even dislike about the various aspects of their job. Ask what school subjects have really helped them to be successful in their career. Another important question involves how they trained for their career. Did they have to go to school beyond high school? Remember, mentors are experienced. They can tell you what you need to know to get started in a particular career.

Step #6. Have fun during your job shadow experience. Share your experience with friends. If it is valuable, please tell your mentor and the worksite host. A follow-up thank you letter is a nice way of expressing your sincere appreciation.

Your job shadow experience is completed. Now you have a chance to sit back and think about the experience. You may find that the job site you visit may confirm that you are



headed in the right direction and have selected a great career. You can also find out that what you thought was a fantastic career is really not what you imagined. Both experiences are valuable. Seize the opportunity to get involved in other job shadowing events. If you want more information on job shadowing, check out www.jobshadow.org. The website of National Groundhog Job Shadow Day has a wealth of information and suggestions for your career exploration.

Source: Job Notes 2002; Submitted by Clint Jones, Business Liaison

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